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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [OREP](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [LI](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL PRICE VISIT TO LIBERIA

REF: A. MONROVIA 662

[B](#). MONROVIA 655

[1](#). Summary. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives David Price (D-NC), Chairman of the House Democracy Assistance Commission (HDAC), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NEB), and Gwen Moore (D-WIS), visited Liberia May 31-June 2. Their visit followed up on a July 2006 visit to the Liberian Congress by U.S. Congress members and staff representing HDAC to determine the viability of a partnership between the U.S. and Liberian legislatures. Codel Price met with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, toured Liberia's Capitol Building, which is being refurbished by the United States, hosted an all-day program for members of the Liberian legislature and their staff, observed a town hall meeting between Bomi County legislators and their constituents in the county capital, Tubmanburg, and visited USAID projects in Bomi County. End Summary.

[2](#). Members of the U.S. House of Representatives David Price (D-NC), Chairman of the House Democracy Assistance Commission (HDAC), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NEB), HDAC member, and Gwen Moore (D-WIS), visited Liberia May 31-June 2. They were accompanied by John Lis, staff director in Representative Price's office, Tommy Ross, legislative assistant in Representative Price's office, and Rachel Leman, policy coordinator in Representative Dreir's office. Their visit followed up on a July 2006 visit to the Liberian Congress by U.S. Congress members and staff representing HDAC to determine the viability of a partnership between the U.S. and Liberian legislatures.

[3](#). Representatives Price, Fortenberry, and Moore toured Liberia's Capitol Building, which is currently being refurbished by the United States (the Liberian legislature is temporarily meeting in another location), immediately upon arrival in Liberia on May 31. They were scheduled to be accompanied on the tour by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate President Pro Tempore encouraged all members of the legislature to express a warm welcome to the Codel by going to the Capitol Building. Representatives Price, Fortenberry, and Moore unexpectedly found themselves greeted upon their arrival at the Capitol Building by a receiving line composed of the majority of Liberia's legislators.

[4](#). Codel Price also met with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (see reftel) on May 31 and had dinner that evening with the House and Senate leadership. The leadership of the Liberian legislature is defined as the Chairpersons of the "statutory" committees: Executive; Foreign Relations; Judiciary; Rules and Order; and Ways, Means, and Finance in the Senate and Executive; Judiciary; Gender; Foreign Affairs; Ways, Means, and Finance; Public Accounts and Expenditure; and Rules and Order in the House of Representatives.

¶5. Codel members hosted an all-day program June 1 for all members of the Liberian legislature and their staff. The program focused on the role of the legislature as an independent branch of government, the role of staff and staff structure, and independent congressional research and analysis. More targeted sessions were held with members on their roles and responsibilities including constituent relations and executive-legislative relations and their respective roles. Sessions for staffers looked at helping members to be responsive to constituents and the role of committees and professional staff. There was a robust turnout for the program (that far exceeded expectations) and the members of the Liberian legislature actively participated in the sessions, took notes, and posed probing questions. Codel hosted a reception for all members of the legislature that evening.

¶6. Codel members visited Tubmanburg, the capital of Bomi County, June 2 and observed a town hall meeting between Bomi's 2 Senators and 3 members of the House of Representatives, including Speaker of the House Alex Tyler, and their constituents. Codel also visited several USAID projects in Bomi County including Radio Bomi, the Valley Center Market, and St. Dominic's School. While at Radio Bomi, the codel addressed regional listeners during a live radio program and discussed the roles and responsibilities of the legislature in a democratic society. After this program, Representative Price, Speaker Tyler, and a Bomi Representative participated in another on-air segment that covered timely issues such as the recent Presidential veto of the Financial Autonomy Act recently passed by the legislature. This follow-up discussion explored the relationship between the executive and legislative branches

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in practical terms for area listeners. Greeted with a traditional cola nut offering, the codel observed reintegration activities at the Valley Center Market, such as a tailoring shop, cooperative agricultural projects, and market improvements. At St. Dominic's School, the codel participated in a brief question and answer session during which Representative Moore responded to a young woman's question about being a female African American Representative. The codel also spoke with ex-child soldiers who had been injured during the conflict, visited an on-site children's mass grave, and listened to requests to end the culture of impunity in Liberia.

¶7. Codel did not clear this cable before departure.
Mazel